

First Conditional

Introduction:

We use the **first conditional** to talk about a **real, future condition** and its **probable/likely result**. Let's read through the examples below:

- *If he misses the bus, he will be late for work.*
- *If you don't study hard, you won't pass the exam.*
- *I won't be tired if I go to bed before 10 o'clock.*
- *They will go for a walk if the weather's nice.*



There are two parts to all conditional sentences: the **if-clause**, which contains the condition, and the **main clause**, which contains the result or possible consequence of that condition.

Zero Conditional	
condition	result
If you heat ice,	it melts.

First Conditional	
condition	result
If it rains later,	I will stay at home.

Ex 1: Let's analyse the structure of the first conditional.

Look at the sentences in the introduction and underline the verbs in the if-clause.

- Which tense are they?
- Which structure is used in the other clause?



Ex 2: Can you match each condition in the first box with its result in the second box?

Conditions
1. If I go to the supermarket later,
2. If it rains this afternoon,
3. If I see Katerina tonight,
4. If I don't practise enough,
5. If I move in with my friends,
6. If the weather is good,

Results
A. I will tell her about the party.
B. I will buy milk.
C. I won't pass my driving test.
D. we will go to the beach.
E. I won't go for a walk.
F. I will miss my parents.

The order of the clauses in conditional sentences can be reversed, Look at the sentences below:

If it rains, I will stay at home. ✓ or *I will stay at home if it rains.* ✓

- Study the forms in the tables below -

Positive: +	Condition	Result
	If + subject + present simple,	+ subject + will + infinitive
	If you study,	you will learn.
3rd person	If she <u>studies</u> ,	she will learn.

Negative: -	Condition	Result
	If + subject + present simple,	+ subject + won't + infinitive
	If we don't study,	we won't learn.
3rd person	If he doesn't study,	he won't learn.

Question: ?	Result	Condition
	Will + subject + present simple	+ if + subject + infinitive
	Will they learn	If they study?
3rd person	Will she learn	if she <u>studies</u> ?

Notice the use of the comma in conditional sentences. When we start a sentence with the if-clause, we use a comma at the end of the clause. We don't use a comma if the sentence begins with the main clause.

If it rains, I will stay at home.
I will stay at home if it rains.

Ex 3: Practice using the first conditional by writing the correct form of the verbs.

- If you _____ to work today, you _____ the presentation. [not go, miss]
- England _____ the competition if they _____ Ireland in the next match. [win, beat]
- If it _____ later, I _____ the dogs for a walk. [rain, not bring]
- _____ you _____ shepherd's pie if Jane _____ it for dinner? [eat, make]
- If she _____, how much _____ she _____? [get promoted, earn]
- She _____ bread later if she _____ to the shop. [buy, go]
- They _____ a taxi to the hotel tomorrow if it _____ too expensive. [take, not be]
- If Philip _____ the bill soon, they _____ any electricity. [not pay, not have]
- _____ he _____ a car if he _____ Wales? [hire, visit]

When do we use the First Conditional?

We use the first conditional to talk about real possibilities in the future. In the **if-clause**, we have a **possible condition** and in the **main clause** we have the **probable or likely result of that condition**.

Possible condition	Probable/Likely result of the condition
If it rains tomorrow,	I will go to the cinema.
If it is sunny tomorrow,	I will go to the beach.

We don't know what the weather will be like tomorrow. Maybe it will rain, and maybe it will be sunny. In the summer, there could be, for example, a 10% chance of rain. In the autumn, there could be a 40%-60% chance. **It doesn't matter if there is a high chance or a low chance. It is still a real possibility.**

If there is a **real possibility**, we can use the first conditional.

What time period are we describing?

The time period we are describing for the first conditional is **usually the future** for both the condition & result.

Possible condition	Probable/Likely result of the condition
If it rains tomorrow, (future)	I will go to the cinema. (future)

The future we are describing could be an **immediate future** or a **distant future**.

However, the **if-clause** can sometimes refer to a **present** or a **general** situation. Look at the examples below:

- If you don't eat your dinner, you won't grow up to be big and strong.***
(*'If you don't eat your dinner'* could refer to the present or we could be speaking generally.)
- If the bus doesn't arrive soon, I will be late for work again.***
(*'If the bus doesn't arrive soon'* refers to the immediate future)
- If I retire early, I will spend my days travelling around the world.*** (*'If I retire early'* refers to the distant future.)

Don't forget ...

In the **if-clause** we use the **present tense**. However, we are not **usually** describing the **present**. We usually use the present tense in conditional sentences to describe a possible situation in the **future**.



Ex 4: Complete the sentences below with your own ideas

1. If I go to the shops later, _____.
2. I will go to the beach tomorrow if _____.
3. I will get a takeaway pizza tonight if _____.
4. If my brother gets the job, _____.
5. I will be angry if _____.
6. They won't go hiking tomorrow if _____.
7. She will have to rent a car if _____.
8. If Peter passes his driving test, _____.

More advice for using the First Conditional**Future Consequences:**

We often use the first conditional to talk about the possible future consequences of our decisions.

- *If I don't study enough, I will fail the test.*
- *If I quit my job, I won't be able to pay the rent.*

It is also used to warn others of the consequences of their decisions or to threaten them.

- *If you don't pay the bill, we will cut off your electricity.*
- *If you don't hand over your wallet, I will shoot!*

**Promises:**

We also use the first conditional to make promises based on conditions.

- *If you pass the exam, I will buy you a car.*
- *If you treat me well, I will always be there for you.*

We also use it to make requests or to ask others to promise us something, based on a condition we offer.

- *If I make the dinner, will you do the washing up?*
- *If I let you watch a film, will you tidy your room after?*

The 3rd person 's':

Don't forget to add 's' to the 3rd person singular (he/she/it) of the verb in the positive present simple.

- *He'll be late for work if he misses the bus.*
- *The business won't survive if it loses more money.*
- *If she studies hard, she will pass the exam.*
- *He'll lose weight if he plays tennis every day.*

Ex 5: How many ways can you and your partner think of to finish the sentences below?

1. **Negative Consequence:** Mum will be furious if ...
2. **Positive Consequence:** If I go to the gym twice a week, ...
3. **Promise:** If you lend me your car, ...
4. **Request:** Will you help me paint the house if ...?
5. **Threat:** If you tell anyone my secret, ...

**Contractions in the First Conditional****Ex 6: Read the sentences aloud.****Remember:**

When speaking and in informal writing, it is common to use contractions.

*In the negative, **will not** becomes **won't**

I will	→	I'll
You will	→	You'll
He will	→	He'll
She will	→	She'll
It will	→	It'll
We will	→	We'll
You will	→	You'll
They will	→	They'll

1. *I'll travel the world.*
2. *You'll help her.*
3. *He'll eat it all.*
4. *She'll lend you the money.*
5. *It'll be lovely.*
6. *We'll buy a house.*
7. *You'll have a party.*
8. *They'll complain to the waiter.*

Let's revise what we have learnt!

- ✓ The first conditional describes a **real condition** and its **probable/likely result**.
- ✓ We use the **present simple** in the **if-clause**, but we are not usually describing the present.
- ✓ We use **will + infinitive** in the **main clause**.
- ✓ The clauses in conditional sentences **can be reversed**.
- ✓ When we start a sentence with the if-clause, we use a comma at the end of the clause. We don't use a comma if the sentence begins with the main clause.
- ✓ The first conditional usually describes the future, but the if-clause can **sometimes refer to a present or general condition**.
- ✓ We often use the first conditional to describe **future consequences, promises, warnings and requests**.
- ✓ Don't forget to add 's' to the 3rd person singular when you use the present simple.
- ✓ We usually use the **contractions** with 'will' when speaking.



Teacher's Notes

Lesson: First Conditional

Level: A2/B1

Time: 1 hour +

Preparation:

- Print or display handouts.

Teaching Method:

Step 1:

- Ask the students the question, “*What will you do if it rains today?*”.
- Write “*If it rains today, I will + infinitive...*” on the board and elicit and write their answers on the board.
- Write the sentence “*If it rains today, I will go for a walk*” on the board.
- Ask the students if the sentence is describing the past, present, or future. **(Answer: Future)**
- Tell the students this is a conditional sentence. Ask them if they think it is the zero, first, second, third, or mixed conditional. **(Answer: first conditional)**

Step 2:

- Give the students a copy of the handout and read through the introduction with the class.
- Students complete Ex 1, individually, before comparing with a partner.
- Elicit answers: **(a) present simple (b) will + infinitive**

Step 3:

- Students complete Ex 2 individually, before comparing with a partner.
- Elicit answers.
- Focus on the order of the clauses in conditional sentences, writing further examples on the board if required.

Step 4:

- Give students some time to study the forms in the table and comma placement.
- Students complete Ex 3 with the correct form of the verbs shown before comparing with a partner. Remind them again that the present simple is in the if-clause. You may need to check understanding of **presentation, shepherd's pie, get promoted, and bill.**
- Elicit answers and add to the board, giving further explanation where required.

Step 5:

- Go through the language notes on use and time period with the class, giving further explanations or examples as required.

Step 6:

- Students complete Ex 4 with their own ideas. You may need to check their understanding of **go hiking.**
- Monitor, giving correction where required.
- Students compare their answers with a partner.

Step 7:

- Go through the language notes on further advice with the class, giving explanations or examples as required.

Teacher's Notes & Answers

Lesson: First Conditional

Level: A2/B1

Time: 1 hour +

Step 8:

- Students work in pairs to complete the first conditional sentences (Ex 5).
- Monitor, giving correction where required.

Step 9:

- Focus on the contractions used with **will** and drill pronunciation.
- Read the sentences in Ex 6 aloud, and ask the students to repeat.

Step 10:

- Go through the revision section with the class.

Answers:

Exercise 2:

1. B
2. E
3. A
4. C
5. F
6. D

Exercise 3:

1. If you **don't go** to work today, you **will miss** the presentation.
2. England **will win** the competition if they **beat** Ireland in the next match.
3. If it **rains** later, I **won't bring** the dogs for a walk.
4. **Will** you **eat** shepherd's pie, if Jane **makes** it for dinner?
5. If she **gets promoted**, how much **will** she **earn**?
6. She **will buy** bread later if she **goes** to the shop.
7. They **will take** a taxi to the hotel tomorrow if it **isn't** too expensive.
8. If Philip **doesn't pay** the bill soon, they **won't have** any electricity.
9. **Will** he **hire** a car if he **visits** Wales?

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